

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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TO AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208637

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UG

SUBJECT: USG-GOU RELATIONS - MEETING WITH ETIANG

1. AF/E DIRECTOR COOTE MET WITH UGANDAN MIN STATE FOR FON AFFAIRS ETIANG AND UN PERM REP IBINGIRA OCTOBER 18 IN LATTER'S OFFICE. MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL AND IBINGIRA COMMENTED AT END THAT HE THOUGHT DISCUSSION WAS MOST WORTH-WHILE.

2. COOTE EXPLAINED TO ETIANG THAT, AS WE HAD RECENTLY TOLD UGANDAN CHARGE MWANGAGUHUNGA AND AMB IBINGIRA, USG WANTED TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH GOU IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. THERE WAS BRIEF PERIOD FOLLOWING GOU RELEASE OF PLANE TRANSPORTING PCV'S TO ZAIRE WHEN WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY PRES AMIN'S SLIGHTLY POSITIVE STATEMENTS RE HIS DESIRE HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH US. HOWEVER, HIS RECENT STATEMENTS WERE MUCH CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE HOSTILE, CULMINATING IN THREAT TO CHARGE KEELEY IN

PRESENCE UGANDAN PRESS AND TV REPS THAT IF USG BECAME INVOLVED IN ME WAR, HE WOULD PUT ALL AMCITS IN UGANDA, INCLUDING CHARGE, IN PRISON. ASSERTING THAT SUCH STATEMENT WAS INTOLERABLE, AF/E DIRECTOR STRESSED THAT WE EXPECTED GOU TO RESPECT DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY OF US EMBASSY PERSONNEL AT ALL TIMES AND TO ACCORD PROTECTION TO ALL AMCITS IN COUNTRY.

2. ETIANG SAID HE WAS PRESENT AT MEETING AT WHICH AMIN

MADE SUCH THREATENING STATEMENT. HE EXPLAINED THAT AMIN BECAME HIGHLY EMOTIONAL ON SUBJECT OF ISRAEL, AND HIS STATEMENT WAS EMOTIONAL, OFF-THE-CUFF REMARK IN HEAT OF MOMENT WITHOUT PRIOR CONSIDERATION. ETIANG WAS QUITE CERTAIN AMIN DID NOT THEN, NOR DOES HE NOW, HAVE ANY INTENTION TO ARREST OR IMPRISON OFFICIAL OR OTHER AMERICANS IN UGANDA. TO EMPHASIZE HIS POINT, MIN STATE REFERRED TO SEVERAL DIRE THREATS WHICH AMIN MADE RE ASIANS PRIOR TO THEIR EXPULSION WHICH WERE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ONLY AND NEVER CARRIED OUT. ETIANG COULD ASSURE US THAT "HE THOUGHT" NO AMERICANS WOULD BE IMPRISONED BECAUSE OF U.S. ROLE IN ME CONFLICT.

4. WHILE HOPING THIS WOULD BE THE CASE, COOTE SAID THAT USG OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT DISMISS OUT OF HAND PUBLIC THREAT BY CHIEF OF STATE AND RESULTANT UNACCEPTABLE RISKS AMCITS FACE IN UGANDA. WE CONTINUED TO WANT TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH UGANDA AND HAD NO INTENTION OF BREAKING RELATIONS OR WITHDRAWING OUR DIPLOMATIC MISSION FROM UGANDA AT THIS TIME. NEVERTHELESS, IN ORDER TO REDUCE RISKS (WHICH WOULD BE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES), WE PLANNED TO PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO REDUCE STAFF OF US MISSION FURTHER AND TO MOVE DEPENDENTS OF OFFICIAL PERSONNEL OUT OF UGANDA. FOR SAME REASON, WE WERE ADVISING PRIVATE AMCITS THAT THEY SERIOUSLY CONSIDER LEAVING COUNTRY.

5. ETIANG COMMENTED THAT US EMBASSY STAFF WAS ALREADY SO SMALL THAT THERE WOULD BE PRACTICALLY NO ONE LEFT IF WE REDUCED IT FURTHER. HE HOPED, THEREFORE, THAT WE WOULD RECONSIDER OUR DECISION. COOTE REPLIED THAT THERE WOULD

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STILL BE SEVERAL PEOPLE THERE, WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH GOU ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. FUTURE DECISIONS, OF COURSE, WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS OF GOU. AF/E DIRECTOR TOOK THIS OCCASION TO EXPRESS TO ETIANG USG'S APPRECIATION FOR ETIANG'S WILLINGNESS AT ALL TIMES TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS WITH CHARGE AND HIS EFFORTS BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE.

6. DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO SUBJECT OF AMIN'S FORTH-COMING VISIT TO US RE WHICH AF/E DIRECTOR AND UGANDAN OFFICIALS DISCUSSED POTENTIAL PROBLEMS. SINCE AMIN HAS DECIDED NOT TO MAKE TRIP, SUBSTANCE OF THIS PART OF DISCUSSION WILL BE TRANSMITTED IN MEMCON RATHER THAN BY CABLE. RUSH

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